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**REPRESENTATIVE PETERSEN NAMED AGRICULTURE COMMISSIONER**

*Longtime member, past House chairman of Environment, Natural Resources,  
and Agriculture Committee selected to head Department of Agricultural Resources*

BOSTON – Energy and Environmental Affairs Secretary Ian Bowles announced today that he has appointed state Representative Douglas Petersen of Marblehead as Commissioner of the Department of Agricultural Resources (DAR). The mission of DAR is to support, promote and enhance the long-term viability of Massachusetts agriculture with the aim of helping this state's agricultural businesses become as economically and environmentally sound as possible. Petersen takes office November 26.

"Agriculture is a priority for Governor Patrick both as a vital industry traditional to Massachusetts and as means of maintaining our rural landscape," said Secretary Bowles. "The Governor and I are pleased to have Doug Petersen taking charge of the state's agricultural agency, and are confident that his experience as past chairman of the Legislature's joint committee overseeing agriculture will make him a great advocate for the agricultural interests of the Commonwealth."

"I am thrilled to have the opportunity to serve the Patrick Administration in this important role," said Petersen. "For 16 years I have served on the committee that considered all matters related to agriculture – two years as vice chairman and four years as chairman – and I have lobbied the federal government on behalf of New England farmers. I look forward to helping the agricultural industry and the communities it supports thrive in the 21<sup>st</sup> century."

Petersen, 59, was first elected to the Massachusetts House of Representatives in 1990. A committed environmentalist, he has served on the Joint Committee the Environment, Natural Resources, and Agriculture for his entire legislative career. He served as House vice chairman in 1996 and 1997, then as House chairman until 2001. He has been a member of the Council of State Governments' Agricultural Subcommittee.

Among his many legislative accomplishments, Petersen spearheaded the effort to defeat an initiative by milk processors to repeal the New England Dairy Compact, which would have dramatically lowered prices paid to Massachusetts Dairy Farmers. He also led efforts to increase technical assistance to farmers in the application of integrated pest management techniques, which save farmers money and provided for safer and healthier farm management. He then authored legislation to extend those pesticide management techniques employed by Massachusetts farmers to schools, playgrounds, and daycare facilities in the Children and Families Protection Act.

Since taking office in January, the Patrick Administration has made agriculture a priority. In May, Governor Patrick sought and received from the Legislature \$3.6 million to aid struggling Massachusetts Dairy Farmers and established, with the Legislature's support a Dairy Task Force that is soon to issue its final report. Funding committed by the Patrick Administration for Agricultural Preservation Restrictions in its five-year capital spending plan years is \$10 million per year, a 35 percent increase over average funding over the past 5 years. This winter DAR will record its 700<sup>th</sup> APR and reach a milestone of protecting 70,000 acres.

Scott Soares, who has served as Acting Commissioner of DAR since January, will become Assistant Commissioner.

"Commissioner Petersen will be a welcome asset to the Patrick-Murray administration," said Senator Stephen M. Brewer. "I have served side-by-side with Doug Petersen on the Natural Resources and Agriculture Committee for over 10 years. We have not always agreed on every issue, but we share a common belief that the viability of agriculture in all of its diversity throughout all parts of Massachusetts is in the best interest of our economy, our long term sustainability of our environment, and the enhancement of our special quality of life here in the Commonwealth."

"I have known Doug for 20 years," Senator Stan Rosenberg said. "In fact, he and I entered the Legislature together. I'm confident that together we will make significant strides in improving the agricultural industry, especially in western Massachusetts."

"Doug Petersen brings to this position a strong environmental perspective," said Senator Pamela Resor, Senate chair of the Joint Committee on Environment, Natural Resources, and Agriculture. "I look forward to working with him to ensure the future of our farms."

"Doug Petersen is the sort of guy I can work with – in fact, I've got a lot of confidence that because of the strength of our relationship, we'll be able to work well together, and accomplish some important things for the agricultural industry and farmers across the Commonwealth," said Rep. Frank Smizik, House chair of the Joint Committee on Environment, Natural Resources, and Agriculture.

"I've worked closely with Doug Petersen in the Legislature on environmental and agricultural issues for the last 14 years," said Rep. Stephen Kulik. "I look forward to working with him in his new role to strengthen our agricultural economy and to build greater public awareness about the importance of farming to our state's quality of life."

Born in New York, Petersen holds a bachelor's degree from Wagner College on Staten Island, a master's degree in science from Simmons College and a master's degree in public administration

from Harvard's Kennedy School of Government. He lives in Marblehead with his wife, Nancy Ryan Petersen M.D., and two children, Ryan and Kati.

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